

Washington, DC – During his first term, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) worked with his colleagues in the 110th Congress to cut the dollar amount of earmarks by 43 percent – down to \$9 billion – and took action to adopt strict rules governing earmarks. As part of his commitment to making the appropriations process fully transparent with regard to accountability for requests made by Members of Congress, in the past, Congressman Sestak has published and placed on his website all approved earmarks. Now, the Congressman will publish on his website all appropriations requests that he submits and, in addition, he supports a number of other key measures to ensure the process is subject to thorough public scrutiny. (See paragraph 4 below.) —

“Our government can only operate most effectively if there is full disclosure of officials’ actions and decision-making processes,” said Congressman Sestak. “For too long, the American people did not have the access to the earmark process that they deserve. I am proud to support this Congress’ move to provide earlier disclosure of decisions made about appropriations requests and make further cuts to earmarks overall. My goal is to end the earmark system eventually, and replace it with an objective competitive grant process that removes political influence and ensures that all projects stand on their merits. To this end, my office is the first Congressional office to publish a one-stop shop for learning about opportunities to secure project funding. The second edition of the Pennsylvania 7th Congressional District Federal and State Grants & Resource Directory will be distributed at a similar series as last year of six grant symposiums, commencing January 16th, to which I have invited all municipalities, elected officials, first responders, Veterans groups and all organizations, from education to health, interested in applying for grants.

“Transparency and accountability, pursued in a bipartisan way, must be inherent in all government actions. That is why on my first day in office in 2007, I supported the requirement that Members must disclose in writing the name and address of intended earmark recipients and the purpose of the earmark, as well as certify the member (and his or her spouse) has no financial interest in the request. Additional reforms prohibited the use of earmarks to reward or punish a Member of Congress for his or her vote and required that all earmarks be subject to full and open debate.”

In addition to details of the projects the Congressman submits to the House Appropriations Committee, his website will include a statement of the reasons that they represent a worthwhile use of taxpayer money. Additional reforms will:

- Increase public scrutiny of Appropriations Committee decisions by making earmark disclosure tables publicly available the same day as House or Senate Subcommittee reports, rather than the day the Full Committee reports their bill, or 24 hours before Full Committee

consideration of appropriations legislation that has not been marked up by a Senate Subcommittee.

- Reduce earmarks further to 50 percent of the 2006 level for non-project based accounts. In FY 2008, earmark funding levels were reduced by 43 percent below the 2006 level. Earmarks will be held below one percent of discretionary spending in subsequent years.

Appropriations requests for this year can be submitted by visiting the Congressman's website at www.sestak.house.gov and going to the grants and appropriations section under the "How Can I Help" tab.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.

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